

ACCREDITATION: SUPPORTING THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL TRADE



Accreditation: Supporting the Future of Global Trade is the theme for 2023 World Accreditation Day which will be celebrated worldwide on 9th June 2023. This year's theme will also highlight how accreditation and accredited conformity assessment activities support the ongoing global supply chain restructuring that continues to be a source of trade normalization as organisations seek new markets and investment opportunities.

Supporting the future of global trade for World Accreditation Day 2023 emphasises on how national and global quality infrastructures are adapting to advances in technology, changes in consumer behaviours and the regulatory environment, new trust mechanisms, and changing business models.

This year's theme also focuses on how accreditation supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1,2,3,5,8,9,10,14, and 17:

- SDG 1 is to: "End poverty in all its forms everywhere"
- SDG 2 is to: "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture"
- SDG 3 is to: "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages"
- SDG 5 is to: "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"
- SDG 8 is to: "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all"
- SDG 9 is to: "Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation"
- SDG 10 is to: "Reduce income inequality within and among countries"
- SDG 14 is to: "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development"
- SDG 17 is to: "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development"

The SDGs are the cornerstone of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations, a comprehensive and ambitious plan of action with the overarching goal of leaving no one behind. The SDGs are a road map for building a better, more sustainable future. These SDGs address global challenges including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, and justice.

There are 17 SDGs with 169 associated targets which seek to guide all global, regional and national development endeavors. Accreditation and, with its other quality infrastructure (QI) institutions including metrology, standardization, conformity assessment and market surveillance, is a critical cornerstone in supporting the SDGs and the three interrelated thematic priorities: creating shared prosperity, advancing economic competitiveness, and safeguarding the environment.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United States Department of Commerce estimates that standards and related conformity assessment have an impact on 80% of the world's trade.

Trust is the fundamental building block of all trading relationships, whether they take place within national boundaries or with other economies, and it is what binds accreditation and trade together. An integrated system of standards, rules, metrology, and approved conformity assessment has long been used by economies all over the world to build high-quality infrastructure. This integrated system has generated the necessary trust to support trade by ensuring that consumers, businesses, and regulators procuring goods and services get what they expect.

Accreditation plays a pivotal role in supporting global trade by removing the technical barriers to trade (TBTs). Quality infrastructures provide businesses with access to a wider international marketplace as well as improving the quality and safety of imports from those economies.

Accreditation provides solutions to issues affecting global trade:

- Supply chains are becoming more complex, and there is evidence of growing regulatory divergence
- Growing concerns related to cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, data protection, fraud and product authenticity
- Consumer consciousness about sustainability, provenance, health and ethics is on the rise, forcing brands to improve their understanding and oversight of their supply network.

Supporting the future of global trade for World Accreditation Day 2023 demonstrates how national and global quality infrastructures are adapting to advances in technology, changes in consumer behaviours and the regulatory environment, new trust mechanisms, and changing business models. Accreditation is key in equally supporting world trade for consumers, businesses, governments and regulators.

The Southern African Development Community Accreditation Service (SADCAS) is a multi-economy accreditation body established in terms of Article 15 B of the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Annex to the SADC Protocol on Trade with the primary purpose of ensuring that conformity assessment service providers operating in those SADC Member States which do not have national accreditation bodies are subject to an oversight by an authoritative body. Typically, in the developed world, each country has its own accreditation body but within the SADC region considering the cost of establishing and sustaining such a body and further taking into account the limited financial and human resources, the region decided to establish one accreditation body which services the accreditation needs of a number of countries. Over the years, SADCAS the first multi economy accreditation body in the world has proved to be a viable, cost effective and sustainable model which optimizes limited financial and human resources. A number of other regions in the world such as the Gulf region, Economic Community of West African States (UEMOA),

have benchmarked on the “home grown” SADCAS model, a concept developed by a group of experts from the SADC region.

SADCAS services the accreditation needs of 14 SADC Member States namely: Angola; Botswana; Comoros; Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); Eswatini; Lesotho; Madagascar; Malawi; Mozambique; Namibia; Seychelles; Tanzania; Zambia; and Zimbabwe. SADCAS provides accreditation services to organizations that perform calibration, testing including medical testing, inspection, certification (personnel, product and management systems) and those that provide legal metrology services against international standards. SADCAS will broaden its scope of accreditation as needs arise. SADCAS also offers training services on accreditation related activities. Seven (7) out of nine (9) accreditation schemes offered by SADCAS are internationally recognized. Hence the accreditation certificates issued by SADCAS for testing/calibration/medical laboratories, inspection bodies and management systems certification bodies’ accreditation schemes in the sub-scopes quality/food/environmental/occupational health and safety managements systems are recognized worldwide thus removing the need for repetitive conformity assessment checks. Effectively this means that through internationally recognized accreditation SADC Member States serviced by SADCAS have better access to foreign markets – A truly global reach!

SADCAS is now in its 14th year of operation and accreditations continue to grow in terms of field and scope of accreditation, sectorial coverage and also in terms of geographical diversity having issued 282 accreditation certificates to 229 accredited facilities in 13 SADC Member States and 2 non-SADC Countries Ghana and Cote d’Ivoire by 31st March 2023. At the same time, SADCAS had 50 accreditation applications at various stages of processing. SADCAS had cumulatively conducted 240 training courses in most SADC Member States as part of its efforts to develop capacity of conformity assessment bodies for accreditation. SADCAS services are focused on the priority sectors for development in selected value chains as identified in the SADC Industrial Policy.

For more information, please visit the SADCAS website www.sadcas.org

OR

Contact

The National Accreditation Focal Point in your country